



CONNECTICUT AFL-CIO

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Testimony of Lori J. Pelletier
Secretary-Treasurer, Connecticut AFL-CIO
March 1, 2012 before the Labor and Public Employees Committee

Good afternoon Senator Prague and Representative Zalaski, and members of the Labor and Public Employees committee. My name is Lori Pelletier and I serve as the Secretary -Treasurer of the Connecticut AFL-CIO, and I am here to testify on behalf of our 900 affiliated local unions who represent over 200,000 union members from all 169 cities and towns.

I am here to testify on the following bills:

S.B. No. 150 (RAISED) AN ACT CONCERNING FAMILY AND MEDICAL LEAVE BENEFITS FOR CERTAIN MUNICIPAL EMPLOYEES.

We support this legislation. Paraprofessionals are an important component of our education system and provide our children with guidance and care. In return for their dedicated service it is only right that the FMLA be extended to these workers. We applaud all of the advocates and legislators from both sides of the aisle for their work on this bill and look forward to the Governor's signature when it becomes law.

H.B. No. 5233 (RAISED) AN ACT CONCERNING WORKERS' COMPENSATION FOR FIREFIGHTERS.

We strongly support this bill. Everyday these workers risk their lives for us, and when one of their own is killed right in front of them we should provide them with the necessary protection in return. My brother is a firefighter and I know first hand what they go through.

When Captain John Keane was killed three years ago in Waterbury his brothers and sisters had to deal with that death not only as a coworker but as a union brother. The fire service is truly a band of brothers (and sisters) and as a society we should not hesitate to extend to them this protection in return for them putting their lives in the line.

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S.B. No. 179 (RAISED) AN ACT CONCERNING CONTRACTORS, SUBCONTRACTORS AND CIVIL ACTIONS TO RECOVER UNPAID EMPLOYEE WAGES AND BENEFITS.

H.B. No. 5240 (RAISED) AN ACT REQUIRING DOUBLE DAMAGES BE AWARDED IN CIVIL ACTIONS TO COLLECT WAGES OR BENEFITS.

Both of these bills are good government. When employers defraud workers or the system set up to protect them those employers should be held accountable. Both of these proposed bills provide the appropriate agency with the right to go after these bad employers.

H.B. No. 5201 (RAISED) AN ACT CONCERNING DEADLINES FOR THE COMPLETION OF MUNICIPAL BINDING ARBITRATIONS.

H.B. No. 5202 (RAISED) AN ACT CONCERNING THE ISSUING OF DECISIONS BY MEMBERS OF THE BOARD OF MEDIATION AND ARBITRATION.

H.B. No. 5203 (RAISED) AN ACT CONCERNING MUNICIPAL COLLECTIVE BARGAINING ARBITRATION AND THE APPOINTMENT OF ARBITRATORS TO THE ARBITRATION PANEL.

H.B. No. 5238 (RAISED) AN ACT CONCERNING MUNICIPAL ARBITRATIONS AND A MUNICIPALITY'S RESERVE FUND BALANCE.

We strongly oppose these four bills. The binding arbitration process works and this type of tinkering adds no value. If legislators believe the process of binding arbitration needs fixing then these bills aren't the answer.

We thank the committee for holding this public hearing and if you have any questions I'd be happy to answer them.